

Millennium Trail: One Link at a Time

The Millennium Trail – a 10-mile “beltway” around the City of Rockville – has been on the minds of City planners, residents, political leaders and committee members since, well, before the Millennium.

Planners of the multi-use path envisioned an off-road, accessible trail around the City for walkers, runners and bikers alike. Connecting neighborhoods in the City was of paramount concern, and the most significant phase of the project is nearing completion — the link on Norbeck Road from East Gude Drive to Veirs Mill Road.

“This part of the project is so vital because there was no paved area for pedestrians or bikers at all,” said Betsy Thompson, the City’s Recreation Program Development Coordinator. “On most other parts of the trail there are at least sidewalks that are being widened, but on this stretch, there was no where for people to go.”

Now pedestrians, hikers or bikers who need to travel along this almost two-mile stretch will have a safe path to follow.

The project also includes a new retaining wall to protect the slope and grade of the land leading into the trail along Norbeck Road and extensive landscaping to improve the aesthetics of the area.

Most of the funding for this segment of the project, which began in June of 2004, came from a TEA-21 federal grant of \$735,000. The total cost of the project is nearly \$1 million.

“Some people originally thought, ‘Why build a path when nobody walks or bikes there anyway,’” Thompson said. “My response is, ‘Of



This dirt path along Norbeck Road will soon be paved, connecting East Gude Drive to Veirs Mill Road – a significant link of the Millennium Trail.

course people are not using that area – there is nowhere for them to walk.’ I have already seen bikers and runners utilizing the trail, and it is not even fully completed.”

Thompson expects that the project will be completed and operational by this spring, despite some minor glitches along the way. Workers encountered a buried gas line that was not marked on the original plans, which was an unexpected challenge that set the time frame back.

“As usual with projects of this scope, there were a few other unexpected twists, but we hope the end product will please everyone,” said Thompson. ■

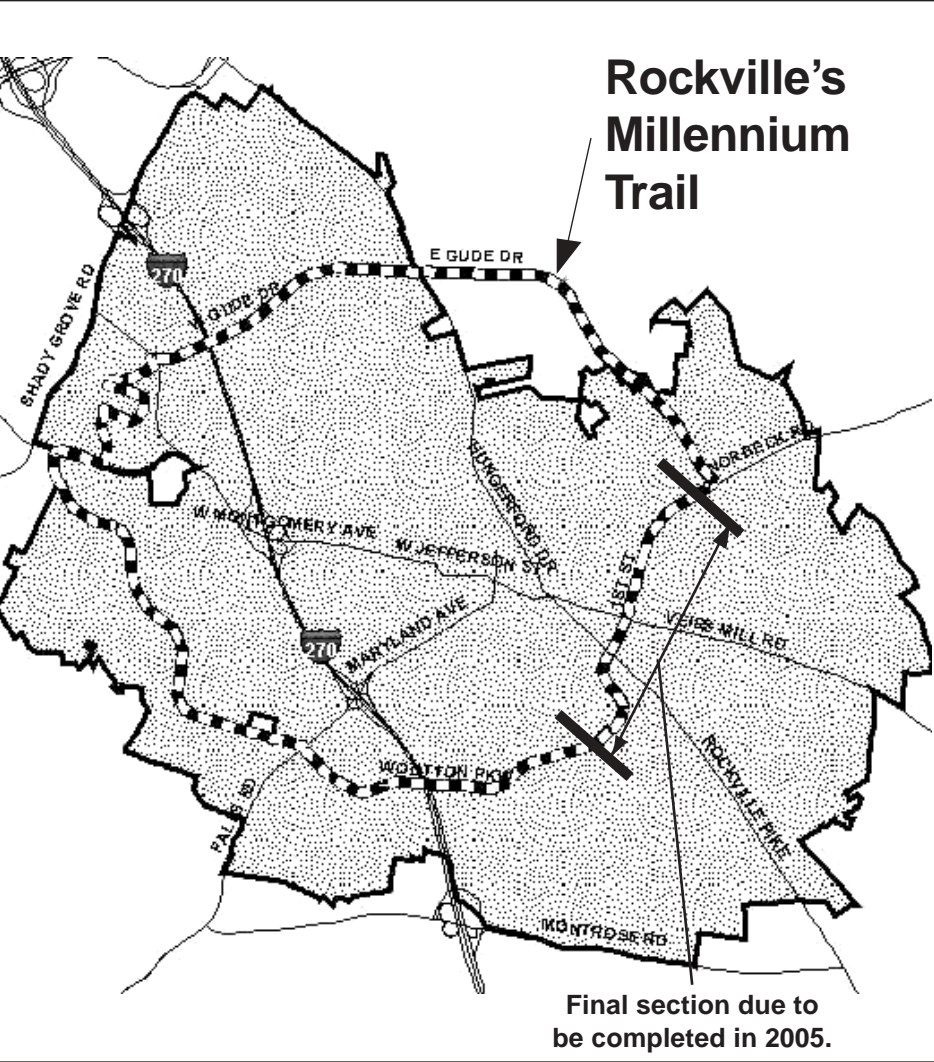
CALL 240-314-8627 FOR MORE INFO

Next Phase: Veirs Mill to W. Edmonston

After the completion of the Norbeck Road phase of the Millennium Trail, the final phase of the project will be a stretch along First Street from Veirs Mill Road, across Maryland Route 355 to West Edmonston, connecting to the trail along

Wootton Parkway.

Firm dates have not yet been set for this construction, but plans are currently in design. For more information visit the City’s Bikeway Plan at www.rockville.md.gov/recreation. ■



The Millennium Trail, marked as a dash-line above, is a 10-mile, multi-use path encircling the City of Rockville.

New Salt Shelter Shakin’ Improved Facility Will Spike Efficiency

By Amy Orndorff

After almost 30 years, the salt dome at Rockville’s Public Works facility on Rothgeb Drive that has served the City during countless blizzards will be replaced in the spring and summer with a new dome that will be larger, more environmentally friendly and equipped to evolve with changing technology.

“Salt is a corrosive material and this dome is at the end of its life,” said Byron Turner, operations maintenance superintendent for the Department of Public Works.

The new salt dome will be one-third larger, with the potential capacity of salt stored in the dome increasing from 2,000 tons to 3,000 tons. The dome will be large enough that when the City’s supply of salt arrives it will be unloaded directly in the dome rather than being stored out-

side. This way, the salt will not be exposed to rain that might wash it away between the time it is unloaded from the truck to the time it is put in the dome.

Annually, the City allots money for 1,800 tons of salt, but that figure can fluctuate with the amount of ice and snow that blankets Rockville during the winter, as well as the rising price of salt.

“I have seen some years when we don’t use any and then there are other years, like back during the blizzard (two years ago), when we use it all,” Turner said.

The new dome will be moved from the present location in the middle of the Public Works yard to the perimeter to allow for smoother traffic flow.

Rockville also will be prepared for technological advances in salt distribution as the new dome will be equipped with pumps that can be used in the fu-



The current salt shelter has served the City for many years, but a new dome will improve operations for City employees.

ture if Rockville decides to switch from dry salt to a liquid salt.

Smaller improvements will be included as part of the new dome to ensure that in case of a snowstorm, the City can adequately serve its residents. These will include a better lighting system and a shelter near the side of the

dome to protect other tools related to the distribution and containment of the salt.

The replacement of the dome is part of a master plan to renovate the entire Public Works facility.

Construction on the new dome should begin in the spring or summer and last six to eight months. ■

Rec and Parks Projects

GENERAL PROJECTS

Asphalt/Concrete • Seal Elwood Smith Community Center parking lot • Work to be completed this spring as weather allows.

Athletic Courts • Replace tennis court lights at Woodley Gardens • Work scheduled to be completed in February.

City Hall Improvements • Reorganization and renovation of second and third floor interior spaces of City Hall for improved use efficiencies • Construction has begun • The project is expected to take approximately 18 months.

Civic Center Long Range Plan • Feasibility study underway to identify adequate and accessible parking, vehicular and pedestrian access and stormwater management on the Civic Center grounds • Study and design recommendations to be completed by end of winter.

Dog Park • Design has been incorporated into the King Farm 28-acre park • Final design to be completed this winter • Rockville Dog Owners Group (RDOG) continues to participate in the planning process.

Energy Performance Contract • Energy savings project for City facilities through the Maryland Energy Administration's energy performance contract • Equipment replacement is 95 percent complete. Planning and installation of the energy management system is 80 percent complete • Completion of all installations is expected by the end of February.

Gude Drive Facility Improvements • Modernization and expansion of the City's Public Works and Parks maintenance complex in four phases • Phase I includes replacement of salt dome, stormwater management upgrades, access improvements and improved debris storage • Construction documents out to bid this winter.



PLAYING IN STYLE ... Brand new playground equipment was recently installed at the parks located at the Elwood Smith Recreation Center (above left) and Maryvale Park (right). Both locations include the latest trends in playground equipment such as rock climbing walls and zip lines, as well as the traditional favorites like the spiral tunnel slide. The spiral slide at Elwood Smith includes a clear covering on the top side to allow for light as the child makes his or her way down to the bottom. Local children assisted in the design of both facilities, informing City staff of the “coolest” equipment to include.

I-270/Route 28 Bike/Pedestrian Bridge • Separate bridge for pedestrians and bicyclists parallel to Route 28 on south side across I-270 to connect Hurley Avenue and Nelson Street bikeways • TEA-21 grant for \$3,124,421 received from State Highway Administration • Bids received exceeded budget • Design being revised and will be re-bid in the winter.

King Farm Farmstead • Contract to stabilize the pole barn has been awarded • Work will begin as soon as the ownership of the property has been transferred from the developer to the City • All work will be in compliance with task force recommendations and with Historic District Commission approvals.

King Farm 28-Acre Park • Details of the park plan have been completed, incorporating comments from the public and the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board • Final design to be completed this winter.

Millennium Trail • Norbeck Road multi-use path from East Gude Drive to Veirs Mill Road • Construction is expected to be completed in the spring • Veirs Mill Road to West Edmonston Drive currently awaiting Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) approval • Majority of cost for both projects covered by TEA-21 grants awarded by SHA.

Playground Equipment Improvements • Replacement of playground equipment at Maryvale and Elwood Smith parks is complete with input from neighborhood children • Design of improvements for Bullards Park and Horizon Hills Park underway.

Urban Forest Renewal • Removal of aging and hazardous trees in Twinbrook, Fallsmead, Potomac Woods and other neighborhoods is ongoing • Replacement plantings take place in the winter.



Public Works Projects

TRANSPORTATION

Bike/Pedestrian Improvements • Maryland Route 28 and Great Falls Road intersection improvements are complete • Mannakee Street sidewalk is complete • Nelson Street crosswalk for access to park construction in spring.

Falls Grove-Funded Transportation Improvements • Majority of the projects are complete • Those yet to be finished include Gude Drive and Gaither Road (mid-October); I-270, Maryland Route 28 and Nelson Street (underway) • I-270 and Shady Grove Road (August 2005).

Right Turn Lane West Bound at Research Boulevard • Construction of second right turn lane to Research Boulevard complete.

Watts Branch Parkway Traffic Calming • Design complete • Construction improvement at Aintree Drive in spring.

STREAM AND STORM-WATER IMPROVEMENTS

Alsace Lane Stream Restoration • Design underway on 500 feet of stream in the Rock Creek drainage area • Construction planned for summer 2006.

Carnation/I-270 SWM Retrofit • Modify existing stormwater management facilities to implement stream erosion control and improve 600 feet of stream in Watts Branch drainage area • Design underway • Construction planned for summer.

College Gardens Low Impact Design (LID) SWM Study • Surveys distributed to the residents in October • Consultants are evaluating various LID techniques on public and private property to improve Watts Branch water quality and reduce runoff • Study kick-off meeting with the community was held in October.

College Gardens Low Impact Design (LID) SWM Grant Implementation • Workshops on rain gardens and rain barrels were held in October • College Gardens Civic Association and the College Gardens Garden Club are soliciting the neighborhood to find volunteers to implement LID techniques on private property.

North Horners Lane Stream Improvement • 200 feet of stream restoration is being designed • Construction is planned in summer.

Northeast Park Stormwater Management Retrofit • Modify existing SWM facility in Rock Creek drainage area • The Northeast Park construction is ongoing with spring finish date.

Red Gate Golf Course Stormwater Management Retrofits • Modify existing SWM facilities and improve 600 feet of stream in Rock Creek drainage area • Design is complete • Construction planned for summer.

Woottons Mill Stream Improvement • 4,400 feet of stream restoration is being designed • Stream restoration is from Watts Branch Parkway to Wootton Parkway in Woottons Mill Park • Pedestrian access will continue • Construction will be completed in January 2006.

UTILITIES

Adclare Water Main Replacement • Approximately 620 feet of six-inch water main in Adclare Road will be replaced with eight-inch water main • Design has started and construction is expected to begin in early 2006.

North Horners Lane Utilities Improvement • Water main upgrade planned between Southlawn Lane and Westmore Avenue • Construction ongoing.

Sewer Rehabilitation • Sewer evaluation survey, including flow monitoring and video inspection of underground piping for the southeastern area of Twinbrook, has been completed and the results are being evaluated • Prioritization of repairs will be based on cost effectiveness • Schedule for construction has not been set.

WATER IMPROVEMENTS

Glen Mill Pump Station • Project will provide the additional pumping capacity needed to provide sufficient water supply to the entire Rockville water system • Construction started in September and will be completed in September 2005.

Water Treatment Plant • Major upgrade in the treatment plant to allow a maximum daily production of 14 million gallons is essentially complete • Construction of covers over the filter wells is complete • An emergency generator will be added • Improvements to sludge handling facilities are being studied.



RED LIGHT, YELLOW LIGHT, GREEN LIGHT: GO!... Residents and commuters in one of the City's newest communities should keep their eyes out for a new traffic signal at the intersection of Piccard Drive and Gaither Road. According to Emad Elshafei, Transportation Engineer for the City, Gaither Road is one of the most heavily traveled in the King Farm area, and the light was installed for safety reasons. The light has been fully functional since December. No other traffic lights are scheduled for installation at this point.



Recreation and Parks Manager Mike Critzer looks at potential sites for Low Impact Stormwater Management in the College Gardens neighborhood. The City is working with residents to identify effective solutions for stormwater management, based on the stormwater system that flows in the neighborhood.

Residents Impact Water In College Gardens

Residents in the College Gardens neighborhood have a significant opportunity to directly affect the environment in their area.

Last fall, the City, along with the College Gardens neighborhood association, offered a series of workshops for residents interested in trying rain barrels or rain gardens on their property for improving stormwater management within individual lots.

On a larger scale, over the summer the City hired consultants Biohabitats, Inc., and the Center for Watershed Protection to study the area and recommend improvements. The College Gardens consultants conducted a community survey to locate opportunities for Low Impact Stormwater Management (LISWM). The survey results were recently unveiled to residents.

The two groups identified runoff patterns, pollution sources and ideal locations for small water quality treatment features such as rain gardens and downspout outfalls on vegetated areas.

Now that residents have been informed about the watershed behavior and discussed proposed locations for LISWM features, City Environmental Engineer Lise Soukup hopes that the overall goal of improving the area's stream quality will be reached.

"Now that residents in the area know exactly what needs to be accomplished to enhance the existing conditions in the area of stormwater management, I believe we

will find great success in College Gardens," said Soukup.

College Gardens water runoff drains into Watts Branch, the largest stream system in the City. Soukup, with the Department of Public Works, in cooperation with College Gardens community groups, is investigating alternative measures to reduce the volume and pollutant levels of stormwater runoff leaving yards, parking lots and streets. Urban areas typically have high pollutant levels such as phosphorus, bacteria, oil and grease, which degrade fish and insect habitat in the streams. Ultimately, this pollution affects the aquatic life and water quality of the Chesapeake Bay.

Rockville also surveyed College Gardens residents in the fall to assess their understanding of watershed protection and interest in pollution reduction. The City plans to use the responses to determine what stormwater treatment measures might have the greatest benefit to Watts Branch and the widest appeal to residential and business property owners in the College Gardens area.

The College Gardens Civic Association and the Garden Club are seeking volunteers to test small-scale water quality improvements on their properties with some cost-share assistance from a U.S. EPA grant obtained jointly by the City and the Civic Association. These pilot projects will be constructed over the next year. Additional workshops may be offered in the spring, depending on resident interest. ■

Water Upgrades In Lincoln Park

Subtle, yet significant. These may be the most appropriate words to describe several projects scheduled to take place along North Horners Lane, between Frederick Road and Dover Road, in East Rockville.

Few people are aware of the vital drainage pipes that run under North Horners Lane, providing an outlet for the small stream that runs in that same area. For years, the stream has experienced much sediment and debris accumulation, detracting from the visual appeal of the water line.

Over the last few months, City employees and local residents worked together to enhance not only the aesthetics of the area, but to also improve the environmental efficiency of the land. Work is scheduled for summer and fall of this year.

"There are really four small projects rolled into one," said Susan Straus, chief environmental engineer for the City of Rockville. "Adding a sidewalk to improve pedestrian safety, adding a curb and gutter to improve vehicular safety, grading and landscaping the stream to improve aesthetics and reduce the amount of sediment/debris accumulation, and finally increasing the size of the drainage pipes under North Horners Lane and Frederick Avenue

to improve conveyance and to reduce future maintenance work."

Straus said that approximately 250 feet of sidewalk will be built, starting at the intersection and heading west on North Horners Lane. Additionally, a bus stop pad will be added on Frederick Avenue,



Stream improvements along North Horners Lane are among the Public Works project planned for this summer.

across from the community center.

"The construction of the bus pad is another great addition to the area, especially because of its proximity of the Lincoln Park Community Center," Straus said.

As for the stream, the land will be regraded to decrease the steepness of the banks and to improve the flow path. The land also will be landscaped and stabilization measures will be added.

Traffic in the area will be mildly affected during one phase of the ongoing project, when the underground pipes will be upgraded in size and changed from metal to concrete.

"Only the stretch of road between Dover and Frederick will be temporarily closed for a very short time," said John Hollida, civil engineer for the City. "Traffic is easily redirected through that part of the City, so we are not anticipating commuter problems." ■

CALL **240-314-8500** FOR MORE INFO

"The construction of the bus pad is another great addition to the area, especially because of its proximity to the Lincoln Park Community Center."

— Susan Straus, chief engineer, environment



Construction near the intersection of North Horners Lane and Frederick Avenue this coming summer and fall will have a minimal impact on traffic.

And the (LISWM) Survey says...

Highlights from the resident survey on watershed behavior included:

- Residents have made lawn care choices that impact stream quality. Reduced fertilizer/weedkiller applications, leaf composting and conversion of lawn to mulched areas would reduce pollutants and the amount of runoff.
- Rooftop disconnection is another easy technique to retain more runoff within lots. At least a third of respondents indicated that they might relocate some of their downspouts to drain into their yards.
- Rain barrels, rain gardens and rooftop disconnections also will help the many residents who water their yards during the summer, and those who wash their cars.
- The vast majority of respondents are using appropriate measures to dispose of household hazardous waste and manage vehicle care on their property.
- Most respondents were interested in having their soil tested to make sure their fertilizer use matched the needs of their yard.

2004 MOST NOTABLE

Rockville's Most Notable City Projects in 2004

Now that 2004 has gone, and a new range of Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) are underway in 2005, City staff thought it might be appropriate to take a moment to reflect on some of the more significant CIP projects during the past calendar year.

The following 10 projects are what staff considers "most notable," based on

impact on residents, long-term effects or completion of much anticipated work. While some projects have gone unnoticed by many, other more popular projects have been widely publicized.

Each project on the list carries a weight of its own and a Rockville New Year would not be complete without its very own top 10 list. ■

Rockville's Top 10 CIP Projects of 2004

- Dawson Farm Park Granary**
Preservation of history with the addition of the park shelter
- Rockville Municipal Swim Center Sprayground**
Inclusion of new water feature to help keep the summer cooler
- Rockville Senior Center Kitchen and Dining Area**
Addition of sun room and upgrades to kitchen
- Traffic Light at Wootton Parkway**
New light for maximum safety of pedestrians
- Millennium Trail**
Significant additional segments added for the multi-use path
- Traffic Circles on Hurley Avenue**
Traffic calming measures via new traffic circles help slow traffic
- Baltimore Road's Raised Intersection**
Protects pedestrians by slowing fast-moving vehicles in the mostly residential neighborhood
- North Horners Lane Pedestrian Improvements**
Three major islands for pedestrian refuge on busy street
- Emergency Storm Sewer Repair near Congressional Plaza**
Needed repair to maintain integrity of sewer line
- Robert Frost Stream Restoration**
Repaired stream valley erosion to this Watts Branch tributary



1. DAWSON FARM PARK GRANARY... *In September of 2004, the Mayor and Council dedicated a new shelter at Dawson Farm Park, which was inspired by the granary that once stood on the historic farming site. The shelter now serves as host to picnics and other outdoor activities at the park.*

2. ROCKVILLE MUNICIPAL SWIM CENTER SPRAYGROUND... *This was certainly a 2004 favorite during the hot summer. The installation of the Swim Center's water feature was the first of its kind in Rockville.*

6. TRAFFIC CALMING ON HURLEY AVENUE... *Pedestrian safety has long been a goal of the Mayor and Council, and one way to work toward that goal is to ensure drivers adhere to the speed limit. Along Hurley Avenue, the City installed traffic circles, which are considered "traffic calming" measures. Commuters must slow down to drive around the circles.*

Pardon the Dust: City Hall Changes Ahead

Many Rockville residents would not live in their home for more than 40 years without periodically making some updates. And the same is true for the building that is home to the heart of the City's government—City Hall.

In order to create more efficient office space by grouping departments together, provide better customer service to residents and improve the safety of City employees, the City has begun an 18-month construction project to update the second and third floors of City Hall. An emergency exit stairway at the back of the building will be the only exterior change.

Built in 1960, City Hall was originally designed for 160 employees. It underwent significant expansion in 1982. However, due to the significant growth in the City in the last 20 years, the number of employees working in the building has increased beyond its capacity. Today, the building houses a total of 226 workspaces with some employees working in extra small areas not near those they collaborate with regularly on projects.

To perform the renovation work, the City awarded Patriot Group a contract in the amount of \$1,611,777.

"The most significant changes visitors will notice when the project is complete

is a redesigned main lobby with the atrium filled in and a more consolidated information desk and cashier area," said Christine Heckhaus, Recreation and Parks Administration Manager. "In addition, workspace in the departments of Finance, Recreation and Parks, Personnel, Public Works and Community Planning and Development Services will be better organized and public meeting space added. Safety and security measures will be included in the renovations such as a new fire exit and an improved sprinkler system. The large mural of the annual Rockville Memorial Day Parade will be protected during construction and will remain in the City Hall lobby."

Currently, construction is underway in the Finance Department area and the former Boards and Commissions conference room. Many monthly Boards and Commissions and some community group meetings have been temporarily relocated to other City facilities during the construction.

Check the calendar on page 7 of *Rockville Reports* for new locations and/or times for the Boards and Commissions meetings.

The locations of some departments will change throughout the construction

process. However, all City phone numbers will remain the same. When visiting a particular staff member at City Hall, it is a good idea to call ahead to confirm their location and availability during the renovation.

More information and updates on the progress of City Hall construction can be

found in future issues of *Rockville Reports*, on the City's Web site at www.rockvillemd.gov or by contacting the project manager, Christine Heckhaus, at 240-314-8603 or heckhaus@rockvillemd.gov. ■

CALL **240-314-8603** FOR MORE INFO

Bullards Park Granted for Renovations of Playground, Surface

Rockville's Bullards Park, a 5.7-acre park that enhances the Rose Hill and Roxboro neighborhoods, will undergo replacement of its playground equipment and its safety surface through a \$98,500 grant from the Community Parks and Playground Program under Maryland's Program Open Space.

Playground equipment in Rockville's parks is upgraded approximately every 10-15 years. In that span, guidelines traditionally change in safety standards and in ADA regulations ensuring access for people with disabilities. Bullards Park was last upgraded about 13 years ago.

The grant will be used to replace two multi-use playground units (\$65,000); to

add a new spongy ground surface that is safer for children (\$30,000); and to extend an existing path (\$3,500) to improve access.

Plans for the new playground have been developed in collaboration with neighborhood residents and are already in the final design stages. Work may begin later this year.

"We were already planning on updating Bullards Park," said Mike Critzer, Rockville's Parks Services Manager. "Having these grant funds will enable us to address the needs on a quicker schedule and provide an outstanding improvement to this pleasant neighborhood park." ■